

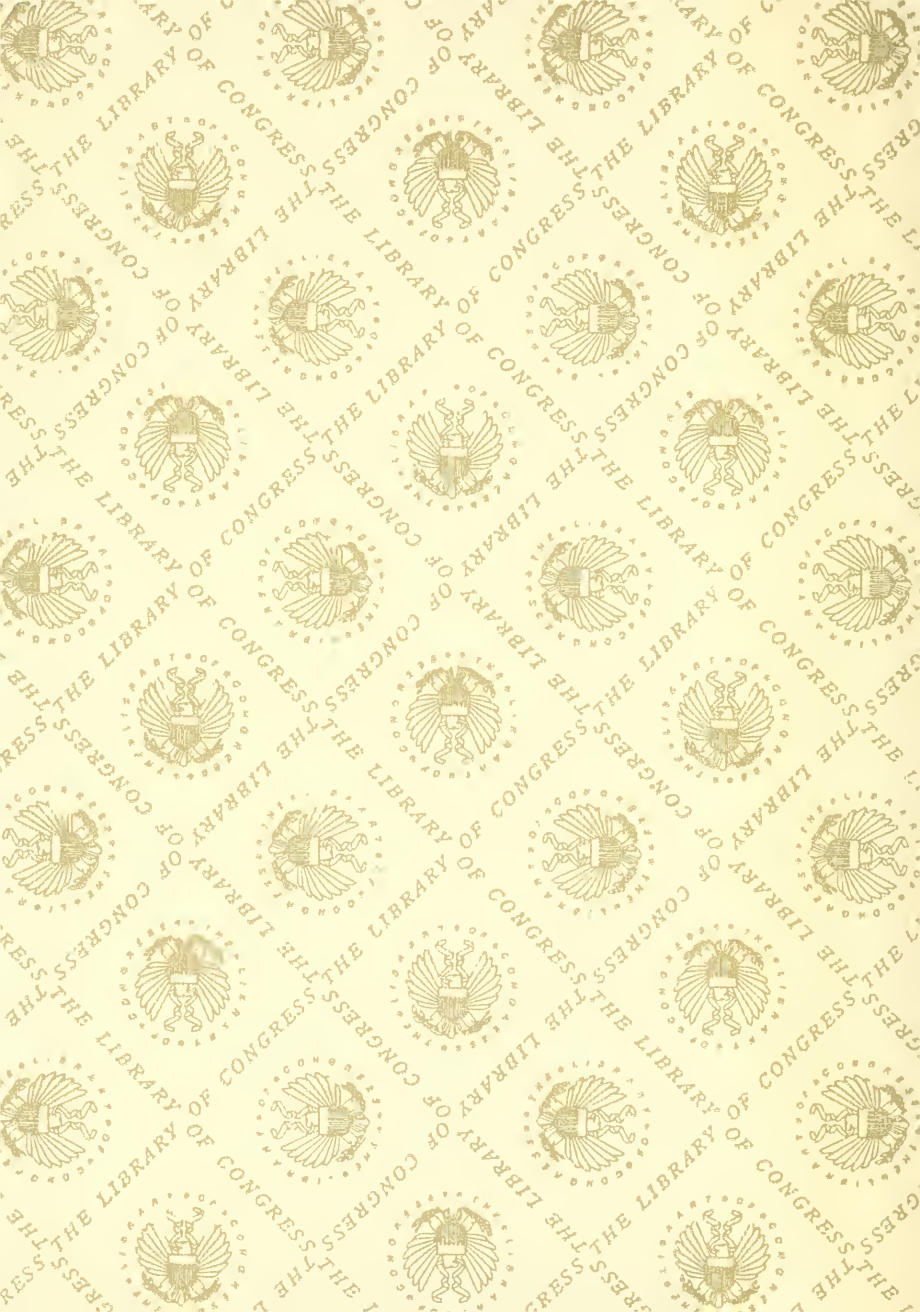
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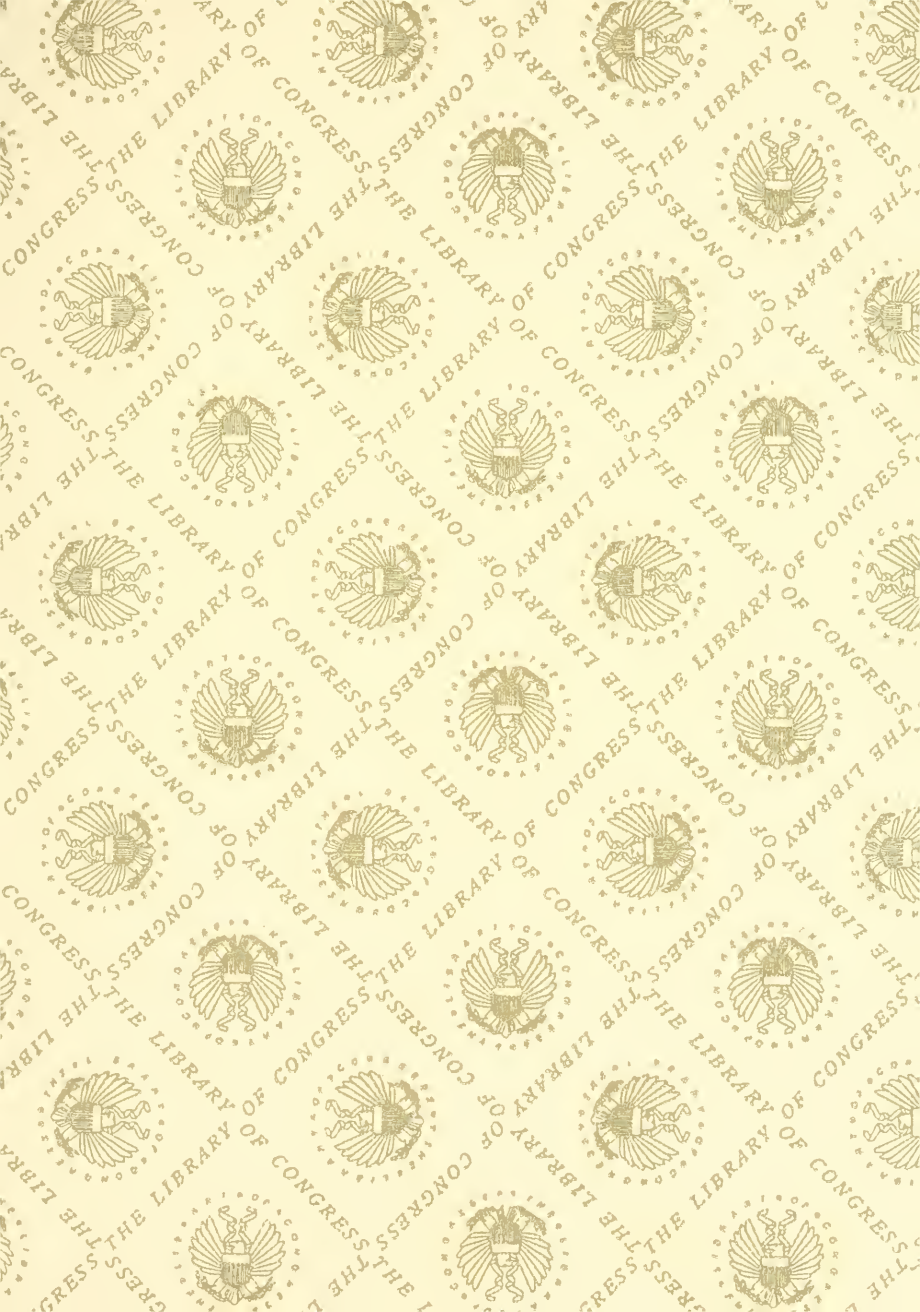
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BEYOND THE STARS

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

BEYOND THE STARS
MANHATTAN
YOUTH
THE QUIET SINGER

BEYOND THE STARS

And Other Poems

by

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

11



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To
William Dean Howells

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BEYOND THE STARS

BEYOND THE STARS

THREE days I heard them grieve when I lay
dead.

(It was so strange to me that they should weep!)
Tall candles burned about me in the dark,
And a white crucifix was on my breast,
And a great silence filled the lonesome room.

I heard one whisper, "Lo, the dawn is breaking,
And he has lost the wonder of the day."
Another came whom I had loved on earth,
And kissed my brow and brushed my dampened hair.
Softly she spoke, "O that he should not see
The April that his spirit bathed in! Birds
Are singing in the orchard, and the grass
That soon shall cover him is growing green.
The daisies whiten on the emerald hills,
And the immortal magic that he loved
Wakens again — and he has fallen asleep."
Another said: "Last night I saw the moon
Like a tremendous lantern shine in heaven,

B E Y O N D T H E S T A R S

And I could only think of him — and sob.
For I remembered evenings wonderful
When he was faint with Life's sad loveliness,
And watched the silver ribbons wandering far
Along the shore, and out upon the sea.
O, I remembered how he loved the world,
The sighing ocean and the flaming stars,
The everlasting glamour God had given —
His tapestries that wrap the earth's wide room.
I minded me of mornings filled with rain
When he would sit and listen to the sound
As if it were lost music from the spheres.
He loved the crocus and the hawthorn-hedge,
He loved the shining gold of buttercups,
And the low droning of the drowsy bees
That boomed across the meadows. He was glad
At dawn or sundown; glad when Autumn came
With her worn livery and scarlet crown,
And glad when Winter rocked the earth to rest.
Strange that he sleeps to-day when Life is young,
And the wild banners of the Spring are blowing
With green inscriptions of the old delight."
I heard them whisper in the quiet room.
I longed to open then my sealèd eyes,

BEYOND THE STARS

And tell them of the glory that was mine.
There was no darkness where my spirit flew,
There was no night beyond the teeming world.
Their April was like Winter where I roamed;
Their flowers were like stones where now I fared.
Earth's day! it was as if I had not known
What sunlight meant! . . . Yea, even as they
grieved

For all that I had lost in their pale place,
I swung beyond the borders of the sky,
And floated through the clouds, myself the air,
Myself the ether, yet a matchless being
Whom God had snatched from penury and pain
To draw across the barricades of heaven.
I clomb beyond the sun, beyond the moon;
In flight on flight I touched the highest star;
I plunged to regions where the Spring is born,
Myself (I asked not how) the April wind,
Myself the elements that are of God.
Up flowery stairways of eternity
I whirled in wonder and untrammelled joy,
An atom, yet a portion of His dream —
His dream that knows no end. . . .

I was the rain,

BEYOND THE STARS

I was the dawn, I was the purple east,
I was the moonlight on enchanted nights,
(Yet time was lost to me); I was a flower
For one to pluck who loved me; I was bliss,
And rapture, splendid moments of delight;
And I was prayer, and solitude, and hope;
And always, always, always I was Love.
I tore asunder flimsy doors of time,
And through the windows of my soul's new sight
I saw beyond the ultimate bounds of space.
I was all things that I had loved on earth —
The very moonbeam in that quiet room,
The very sunlight one had dreamed I lost,
The soul of the returning April grass,
The spirit of the evening and the dawn,
The perfume in unnumbered hawthorn-blooms.
There was no shadow on my perfect peace,
No knowledge that was hidden from my heart.
I learned what music means; I read the years;
I found where rainbows hide, where tears begin;
I trod the precincts of things yet unborn.
Yea, while I found all wisdom (being dead),
They grieved for me. . . . I should have grieved
for them!

PEACE

THERE is a rumor of eternal Peace;
The wonderful wild news sweeps through the
world

That nevermore loud drums shall beat alarms,
Or bugles blow the awful songs of war.
There shall be silence where the sabers clashed,
And utter calm where once the cannon roared;
The Lord's green fields shall not be wet with blood,
But white with innocent daisies in the Spring;
And where the crashing cavalry once plunged
Our hearts shall hear the lyrics of the birds
When soft May mornings break in years to be.

No more shall men of alien races march
With fiery hearts and madness in their eyes
To crush their weaker brothers 'neath their heel;
Nor women wait through aching days of grief,
Through pitiless hours of barren loneliness
For husbands and young sons to come back home.
No more shall children stir in the long nights,

P E A C E

Dreaming of absent fathers; and no more
Shall faithful hounds whine at bleak thresholds, sick
For one whose feet fled when the trumpets called.
White Peace, the whisper runs, shall wrap the earth,
And hushed be all the thundering cannonade.

Wise men have dreamed this dream; and I have
dared

To dream it every hour of the years.
When I have stood high on some starlit hill,
And watched the moon go her great silver way
In silence that was deeper than the heav'ns;
When I have seen the majesty of night,
And in my contemplation learned that life
Was but a thread on Time's immortal loom,
(My life the least of all), and nations less
Than ribbons that are fashioned at the last
In one divine, amazing, sumptuous plan,
Then I have wondered at our boast and pride,
And marveled at the shallowness of kings,
The madness of all those who rise to lead
Their little countries in tempestuous strife,
And break men's bodies, and break women's hearts.
Be swift, O laggard years, to bring that day

P E A C E

When Right shall be the master of old Might,
And Love with her soft processes shall see
Her hour triumphant and her legions large.
Tear down the bulwarks of incessant Hate,
And let pale Pity rise from the dull dust,
Her unfamiliar eyes two flashing stars
Emerging from the shadows of the deep.

But dream not there shall be eternal Peace,
Though red battalions have been scattered far,
And mighty armies lost like Autumn winds.
Call in the iron navies of the world,
And sink them in the ocean's monstrous heart;
Sunder the bastions of the universe,
The watchful forts that face the open sea;
Still we shall hear the rumors of great wars,
And see the smoke of conflict; we shall know
The old, old battle of the rich and poor —
The poor with watch-fires in the engine-room,
And regiments of children in the mills;
The rich with beacon lights upon their hearths,
And golden domes their perfumed tents at night.
But when wild Winter bares her icy sword,
One army shall remember Valley Forge,

P E A C E

And tremble at the menace of the days;
One army shall meet endless Waterloos
In the long line of years that sing defeat,
And in their tattered uniforms march on,
Till Death, the last Commander, bids them halt.
There shall be desolation in their eyes,
And sorrow where they pitch their city camps;
And rags shall be the emblem of their cause —
Sad banners that reveal their very shame.

Dream not of Peace eternal till there comes
Some hour supreme when these two hosts shall meet
In a great whirlwind of high brotherhood!

AERE PERENNIUS

I

I NEVER learned the wonder of that lane
Drenched with the Summer rain,
Wherethrough my boyish feet were wont to pass,
Until I left it for the passionate town,
Marble and iron and brass,
Filled with all laughter; yea, and filled, alas,
With life's immortal pain.

Then I beheld its magic. Then I knew
How every rosebud grew,
How every leaf rocked in the wind-blown noon.
Far, far away I saw it beneath the moon
On matchless nights of June,
When the untarnished silver of the sky
Poured through the boughs,
And two young lovers whispered deathless vows.
And then I heard
Each song-enraptured bird

AERE PERENNIOUS

Pipe his mad music as we wandered by.
I breathed the fragrance of the hawthorn-flowers,
I drank the joy that the black cup of night
Poured for my youth's delight —
While round about me from great steeples and
towers,
The punctual city clocks sounded the rushing hours.

I shall go back some day
To the enchantment of that wildwood way.
I shall know once again the scent of musk
In the cool Summer dusk,
And lay my head upon Night's pillow; lay
My fevered body where the blossoms sway
Against the velvet curtains of the dark.
I shall see glow-worms light their little spark
In the hushed evening; hear the crickets croon,
And marvel at the moon.

Yet will it all be lovely when I take
The ancient road, for ancient Love's white sake?
Can Life repeat one word of her old story,
Restore her tattered glory,
Revive the dead allure of her first days?

AERE PERENNIUS

I am enamoured of the City's face!
And shameless I am lost in her embrace.
Her flashing fiery eyes sweep and control
My piteous soul.

AERE PERENNIOUS

II

I shut the door on the world's bright face;
I fled from the race,
And I clung to the breast of the holy night,
As if the dark were the bosom of God.
I knelt me down on the clean green sod,
And I looked at the constellations white
As they swung above me, on that blue height;
I who was lost, and crushed, and driven,
Reached till it seemed I must reach to heaven
And snatch the stars from the hands of the Lord!
I who had lost myself in the maze
Of crowded ways
And terrible days,
Had come to the hour that all men need
After the grime and dust and greed.
Yet I said no word,
For speech was vain, and I could not pray. . . .
I only knew I had found the way,
And quiet and worn and tired in the great night I lay.

AERE PERENNIOUS

III

I never knew the wonder of your eyes.
(Forgive me, angel in a woman's guise!)
Until I left you for the gleam and lure
That never can endure.
I left you for adventures strange and wild,
(A man who was a child);
I followed gypsy patterans and trails,
Oceans and sorrows, joys and stinging gales,
Lights in the distant vales;
I followed gold and beauty,
And the bright moment's duty;
I fared to cities of immortal fame,
And drank the wine of shame.
Hate o' the world and Love o' the world I found
In paths unknown of men.
In tumult and in passion I was drowned,
In falseness and in fury I was bound;
Yet always at the last
When the dread days were past,
Dreams of you came again.
I who had fled from your enduring heart

AERE PERENNIOUS

To wander ways apart,
Knew the rich dream of you ever, ever unto the end!

Why did I leave all that I loved the best
For a sad quest?
Why did the wind's voice on the open road
Sing till I stifled in my warm abode?
Why did the rivers call me, and the sea
Whisper of shadowy islands strangely blest?
Why did I leave my furrow and my friend
For dim uncertainty?
Why did I then forget a woman's face,
A woman's eyes,
And torture Love with longing? . . . Love is
wise,
And we are fools who leave her sheltering-place.
Yet Wonder beckoned me. I followed her
With the first leaf's light stir.

AERE PERENNIOUS

IV

I came to You from the stress of life,
Sick with sorrow and doubt and strife.
I dared to touch your garment's hem —
The flooding tears I could not stem.
You had remained, like an absolute star;
You had been firmer than the high hills;
You had been constant though I was gone
Like the pale dawn.
Your mouth was the rose that I had lost,
Your face was the moon that I had missed,
Your eyes were the steadfast planets of heaven,
Given me once — and once again given!
Your hair was the cloud that God had tossed
Above the light of your shining face.
Your breath was the perfume of old crushed roses
That once I drank in Youth's garden-closes;
Your voice was the bird
That my soul had heard
In the wildwood peace when it sang the Word.
You were the sure unchanging sun
Lighting me back from the road I had run.

AERE PERENNIUS

I dared to return, and breathe your name,
I dared to show you my desperate shame.
I dared to dream that the shattered story,
The ancient good, the tattered glory,
Could be restored. But I dared not say
The words that even a Judas may. . . .
Yet in that hour you kissed my lips,
And in the hushed darkness alone we lay.

A BALLAD OF SHAME AND DREAD

I

THE rain rushed by in silver sheets;
I crossed the empty thoroughfare
With visions of my glowing fire
When I had climbed my lodging stair.

The wind was whispering like a ghost,
The lights were chains lost in a blur;
And as I hurried on I heard
A voice that said, "Good evening, sir!"

We men know well that ancient sound
On many a fair and starlit night,
That strives to hail us tenderly
To prospects of a sad delight.

But on a storm-swept night like this
How strange it was that there should be
One of that mighty army out,
Willing to sell herself to me!

A BALLAD

I turned, astonished. In her eyes
I saw the old, old look of pain;
Poor, painted girl whose face was wan
And terrible in the falling rain.

I read a message in her gaze
That I had never read before;
And as I paused the tempest shook
And rattled every neighboring door.

It was not passion that evoked
The sudden impulse in my heart;
But swiftly from the windy street
I drew the lonely girl apart.

I told her that her eyes looked tired;
I never knew such eyes could be. . . .
She smiled that tragic smile of hers,
And like a hound went home with me.

A BALLAD

II

The fire was ruddy on my hearth;
It lit the corners of the room.
I poured some sherry from a flask,
And drew two great chairs from the gloom.

And from my cupboard I brought forth
A little supper — just a snack;
Mysteriously she smiled when I
Pulled my best pipe down from its rack.

Outside, the wind howled through the night
In desperate delirium;
And on my roof the rain beat fast,
As if upon a muffled drum.

Her cloak fell back; her hood fell, too;
I saw her wonderful gold hair,
A cataract of glowing fire
That shamed my hearth's reflected flare.

A BALLAD

It was her eyes that held me most —
I never dreamed such eyes could be,
Tired as the dust of ancient queens,
Or ruined cities by the sea.

How strangely from their blue-grey depths
They quietly searched through my own;
They held the knowledge of the years —
How much, how much they must have known!

She saw my rows of friendly books,
My littered desk, pipes and cigars —
O homely things, made lovelier now
Since they fell on you — two strange stars!

But always back to me they came,
As if in wonder, half afraid;
Yet even on her fragile hands
No kiss of mine had yet been laid.

A BALLAD

III

Long, long we sat, without one word;
Somewhere a clock boomed forth its chime.
I did not count its distant strokes,
I did not heed the hurrying time.

At last she stirred. I saw her lips
Part for an instant, and then close —
Red lips whose crimson made them seem
The painted wraiths of some dead rose.

Again they parted, and she spoke:
“ I never knew a man before
Who had not told me his desire
The moment that I crossed his door.

“ And yet ”— her tears fell like the rain —
“ You have not claimed your old, grim right.
Ah! can it be you guess, strange friend,
The wonder you have wrought to-night?

A BALLAD

“ I am as others of my kind;
I fell — the worn-out tale of pain.
You knew me for a harlot — still
You snatched me from the wind and rain.

“ You gave me bread, you gave me wine,
You let me sit before your fire —
I whom you found upon the streets,
A pallid Daughter of Desire!

“ You pitied me — and that was all! . . .
Oh, would you guessed how my soul flew,
The instant that I read your heart,
And dared — to dream of loving you!

“ Yes! — do not smile! — I dared to dream
The dream that every harlot kills,
Lest it should lift her to the heights,
Lift her to the exalted hills.

“ We cannot love — save for an hour;
Then on to lesser loves we fare.
Each night, each week, each month, each year,
They dwindle, and we reap Despair.

A BALLAD

“That is our dread — that we may love!
Our shame would drag a good man down
If he should ever deign to stoop,
To stoop, and crown us with a crown.”

She rose, and trembled toward the door;
The fire was low, and in the gloom
I only saw her eyes — strange stars
That wonderfully lit the room.

I followed her. “Girl! girl!” I cried,
For there was madness in my soul.
It was too late. . . . She closed the door,
And down the darkened stairway stole.

A BALLAD

IV

The rain rushed by; the storm still blew,
The dawn was lost in a great blur;
I threw my window wide. Alas!
There was no single trace of her.

I never saw her face again;
But her strange eyes have haunted me
Through many a troubled day and year . . .
I never dreamed such eyes could be!

LOVE HATH A CHALICE

LOVE hath a chalice, filled with glowing wine,
Wherefrom they drink who have confessed
Love's name;
And having tasted of that draught divine,
Their hearts go forth, more holy than they came.

I have seen one come softly from Love's priest,
With such exultance leaving that high place,
I dared not look — I being among the least —
Save for one instant on his hallowed face.

THE SWORD

THE one I love the best
Hath stabbed me — with a jest.
To her, it was a word,
To me, a shining sword;

A sword that, having slain
Our love, falls not again
Back to its sheath; for see,
Its bright blade rusts in me!

TWO SONGS OF LONDON

I — London Unvisited (1910).

LONDON! I have not heard your thundering
voice,
Save in my dreams. The magic of your name,
Your wonder and your fame,
Your glory and your shame —
I have not known
Save as the winds and hurricanes have blown
Rumors of your wild passion to our shores.
When will my heart beat with your iron heart?
When will my pulses quicken and rejoice
With your strange music, stranger than all art?

You are a monster shell that holds the roar
Of the wild sea of life.
So loudly rings the strife
That even across the wastes I hear you sing,
Faint as the murmur of a robin's wing
Above me on a silver morn of Spring.

TWO SONGS OF LONDON

I hear you as a sick man hears a fife
In a far street,
And the faint marching of ten thousand feet.
He cannot see the pageant in the sun,
The flashing sword and gun;
Only the echo of the loud parade
Comes to his window where he dreams, almost
afraid.

London! you are the heart of the wide world.
Wrapped in grey mist,
How you must shine at night, an amethyst
Whose fiery beams reach through the terrible dark
And flash to every corner of the earth!

You are a woman, with Time's awful mark
Upon your brow. And you are foul — and
clean! —
You are a harlot — and a holy queen;
You are the terror and the joy of life —
A desperate mistress and a patient wife.
O London! you are false, and you are true —
Evil or good, I am in love with you!

TWO SONGS OF LONDON

II—London Faces (1911).

I cannot forget those London faces,
Tragic eyes that haunt me yet,
Ghosts of men in terrible places,
Shadows of women. . . . I cannot forget.

On the Embankment they hurried by me,
Stared at the Thames — and then moved on;
The evening fog that hovered nigh me
Hid them an instant, and they were gone.

At Charing Cross and Piccadilly
They followed my hansom through the rain;
Nights were black and nights were chilly,
But thick with the poor was each London lane.

Pale, pinched faces, Oh, how ye haunt me,
Thin, gaunt beggars with lifted hand,
A sea is between us, but still ye want me,
Lonely derelicts tossed on the Strand.

TWO SONGS OF LONDON

A sea is between us! . . . But I remember;
Though leagues divide us, ye haunt me yet —
Eyes with the age of bleak November,
O London faces, I cannot forget!

AN EASTER CANTICLE

IN every trembling bud and bloom
That cleaves the earth, a flowery sword,
I see Thee come from out the tomb,
Thou risen Lord.

In every April wind that sings
Down lanes that make the heart rejoice;
Yea, in the word the wood-thrush brings,
I hear Thy voice.

Lo! every tulip is a cup
To hold Thy morning's brimming wine;
Drink, O my soul, the wonder up —
Is it not thine?

The great Lord God, invisible,
Hath roused to rapture the green grass;
Through sunlit mead and dew-drenched dell
I see Him pass.

AN EASTER CANTICLE

His old immortal glory wakes
 The rushing streams and emerald hills;
His ancient trumpet softly shakes
 The daffodils.

Thou art not dead! Thou art the whole
 Of life that quickens in the sod;
Green April is Thy very soul,
 Thou great Lord God!

APRIL MADNESS

THERE is a time when the young Year
Goes mad with very ecstasy;
When all the rapture of the world
Is crushed in one wild melody.

It is the hour when April comes
With silver flute and virelay,
With magic pipe and madrigal,
And sings her happy heart away.

The bloom and wonder of the Spring
Are vocal on her golden tongue;
The soul of Music comes to earth,
And life, and love, and joy are young.

Join, O my heart, in this wild song;
The jocund April sets you free.
Drink the old wine of her new days —
Go mad with very ecstasy!

WAITING

I THOUGHT my heart would break
Because the Spring was slow.
I said, "How long young April sleeps
Beneath the snow!"

But when at last she came,
And buds broke in the dew,
I thought of my dead love,
And my heart broke too!

THE HEIGHTS

WE climbed the hills, the tumbling hills,
The mighty shoulders of the world,
When May was rich with daffodils
And Spring's green banners were unfurled.

We saw from our exultant height
The quiet villages afar,
The roads like ribbons clean and bright,
The river a long silver bar.

How great from the low plain we deemed
The wind-swept summit of the hills;
How beautiful the valley seemed
Up there among the daffodils!

HOW SOFTLY RUNS THE AFTERNOON

HOW softly runs the afternoon
Beneath the billowy clouds of June!

How brightly every moment slips,
How lightly sail the great cloud-ships!

How slowly all the galleons go
Within that airy sea of snow —

Their white sails set, vast argosies
Bound for mysterious Hebrides!

Ah, let them vanish in the light
Beyond the sun, beyond the night,

Faring to harbors strange and dim
Beyond the great world's utter rim!

I shall not care; I envy not
Their journeyings to lands forgot;

HOW SOFTLY RUNS

For in the wonder of your smiles
My heart is on enchanted isles;

And in the silence of your soul
I reach love's paradisal goal;

In the soft pressure of your hands
I touch far magic fairy-lands;

And in the rapture of your kiss
I find the heavenly peaks of bliss.

Beneath the billowy skies of June
How softly runs the afternoon!

THE HARVEST OF THE SEA

(In Memory of the *Titanic*.)

THE jealous Sea moaned in the April night:
“Lo! there are comrades hidden in my heart,
Unfortunates who sought me, sick of life.
But I am hungry for brave souls; I crave
Their warmth and passion through my chilling tides;
Their heads upon my bosom, and their hands,
Like children’s hands, about me in the dark.
I need their blood in my cold loneliness.”

A Titan sailed her weary leagues of foam,
Unknowing her strange wish, her mad desire.
But there was menace in the starlit night,
And sudden doom upon deceiving paths,
And a wild horror on the mighty deep.

The grey Sea laughed — and drew those brave men
down,
And braver women who but mocked at Death,

THE HARVEST OF THE SEA

Seeing that Love went with them. These the souls
The awful Sea desired! These the hearts
She waited for in that stupendous hour!
They were enough to warm the Arctic wastes,
To fill with furnace heat the frozen zones,
And fire the very Sea that was their grave.

But dream not, mighty Ocean, they are yours!
We have them still, those high and valiant men
Who died that others might reach ports of peace.
Not in your jealous depths their spirits roam,
But through the world to-day, and up to heaven!

GLORY SHALL FOLLOW GLORY

I

KEATS died — who knows? — in the wild
bloom of Youth,
And learned all Truth,
That “ Adonais ” might be sadly sung! —
That through the halls of heaven, from Shelley’s
tongue,
That royal dirge
Might thrill and surge,
Deathlessly young!
Perhaps a poet passed
That one might tell at last
In this immortal song his beauty and glory;
Chant his lament
For shining days soon spent,
In a great glowing story.

GLORY SHALL FOLLOW

II

Does Love thus go,
(Whither, we do not know),
That one may sing the grandeur of Love's name?
That one who felt his fire and his flame
May stand in adoration at his pall,
And in a song supreme, majestic,
Voice the eternal wonder of the dead?
Ere Love has fled,
Silent are we before his face divine;
But when the lamps are wasted,
And the last cup is tasted,
And stern Death sets her crown upon his head,
There is a singer who must sing Love's praise,
Record his dreams and days,
And keep the light forever before his shrine.

AN AUGUST NIGHT IN THE CITY

I KNOW a sad park where, on breathless nights,
Throng those whom through the day the hot
sun smites —

The pallid poor, unlettered and alone,
Whose hearts are hotter than the aching stone.

This is their dormitory; here they fare
After the Summer noon's relentless glare.
See! here they crowd like sheep without a fold,
While all around them rings the city's gold.

But there are coasts beside a lonely sea,
And hills and glens and many a wind-swept lea
Where man has never broken the silence deep. . . .
Yet here to-night an army falls asleep!

DUST AND DREAM

EVEN as rust
Hides the sword's gleam,
So earth's dull dust
Obscures heaven's dream.

Yet do I trust
Death's hour supreme;
For, being dust,
I shall live the dream!

NEVERTHELESS

I

HE heard the fifes at the end of the street,
He heard the marching of thousands of feet;
The rush and the murmur, the beat of the drum,
The sudden strange delirium;
He saw the gold banners and flying flags,
The rapturous faces of lads and hags;
The light romance, and the gleam of it all,
The wonder, the magic, the dream of it all.

But he did not see the lonely campfires burning
On distant fields; and he forgot the yearning
Of aching hearts when nights were filled with dread;
He did not see the piteous, helpless dead.
He did not think of sorrow and alarms,
The empty years that mocked his empty arms;
He did not think of many a blood-stained hill. . . .
Yet had he thought, he would have followed still!

NEVERTHELESS

II

She heard the story — old as the years;
She waited through nights of girlhood fears
For the dream to come, as come it must,
And make a glory of the dust.
She said, “No love shall be like ours —
Life’s roadway bright with eternal flowers.”
She saw the beauty, the light of it all,
And the terrible, splendid might of it all.

But she did not know of days and nights of weeping,
Heart-breaking absence and slow shadows creeping
Around her couch to hide Love’s blazing light.
She did not know Love has its day — and night.
And she forgot the thorns amid the roses,
Forgot that sometimes Love’s book softly closes;
She did not know Love’s sorrows blind and kill. . . .
Yet had she known, she would have followed still!

RISEN INDEED

HOW can I doubt that He is risen indeed,
 Since at the Spring's exultant birth
 Through His green earth
I see the flowering of each hidden seed,
And feel again the old immortal need?

How can I doubt, when through white lanes I pass,
 Seeing the ancient beauty on the boughs
 In God's great house,
Hearing the bells at this Aprilian Mass,
Seeing the congregation of the grass?

How can I doubt? Nay, let me bow my head,
 Before the wonder of the April flame,
 In tears and shame,
Since for one instant (O black moment of dread!)
I dared to think that the great Lord was dead!

THE MYSTERY

THEY who have loved too well — and been betrayed,
Tried in the fire and utterly dismayed,
Strange, is it not, how they return to Love,
And bare their hearts to his great gleaming blade!

PENANCE

SOMETIMES it seems to me the sea must ache
With the vast loneliness its great heart
knows —

Its mighty beat, its thundering surge and sway
Lost in the empty spaces, in the dark
Of desolate nights unpierced by any star.
On coasts forlorn it sheds its tears in vain;
Up storm-swept crags it sweeps with joy, and then
Falls back to sob in the old terrible way.

Who knows but that for all the voiceless dead
The sea has grasped and hidden in its heart,
It now must pay with this wild loneliness;
Must beat forever on far solitudes
Of rock and ruin and unresponsive isles,
And sing, colossal sinner of the world,
An endless chant for its unending crimes?

THE POOL

TO that great poppy-pool
 Whence all pale visions come,
Sleep led me only yesternight,
 Her white lips sealed and dumb.

I found them there — old days
 That I had lost erewhile;
And lo! I found one dearer thing —
 My vanished Love's sad smile.

I drank of that blest pool
 Whose waters sang and tossed.
Asleep, I knew the ecstasy
 Of all I ever lost.

YOUTH IS CRUEL

YOUTH is cruel to the old.
See it flaunt its locks of gold
In the windy morns of Spring;
Hear its laughter — that mad ring
Mocking Age's echoing.
See its jubilant light skip
And its own good fellowship,
Crowding old ones from its way.
Youth is cruel, lackaday!

Youth is cruel, youth is blind;
Nay, it would not be unkind.
Youth is heedless,— that is all,
As it sings its madrigal;
Only crabbed Age is small.
Youth knows not its mighty strength
Till a sad day comes at length
When it whispers in the cold,
“ Youth is cruel — to the old! ”

THE DEAD MARCH

(In Götterdämmerung.)

NOT only did I hear
The thundering chords that swept round Siegfried's bier,
But I heard, mysteriously low,
The far and solemn tread
Of the old army of the mighty dead —
They who went marching long and long ago
Toward the great blinding glory of God's place.
I saw each beautiful face,
More beautiful now in death;
I heard their quiet footfalls as they passed,
I saw triumphant banners in the sun
As one by one
They filed before me, happy, happy at last.
I heard faint bugles and far mystic singing,
I heard the echo of a lark's song ringing
Above the hushed solemnity and peace
Of this slow march that sang the Great Release.

THE DEAD MARCH

They moved before me — the exultant dead!
One came, a glistening helmet on his head,
Then popes and kings in white and purple and red;
And legions from old battles, emperors
And mighty captains from adventurous wars;
High poets, and sad seekers of the Grail
With countenances pale;
Imperial hosts that dazed me with their glory;
Silent, yet eloquent with Death's new story —
A wonder on their lips I could not read,
I who was living indeed.

I saw them pass — sinner and saint and sage,
Sovereign and beggar of an ancient age,
Tatters and pomp one at the final hour —
One, one at last in that vast harmony,
The concentrated utterance of sound
That every falseness drowned
In a wide peace, immortally profound,
Beyond the borders of Immensity.

SUNDAY

WHEN I was a very little lad
I used to go walking with my Dad.
Sunday! yes, that was the day for me,
The day of days, when Dad was free.

He always bought me a red balloon
That seemed to me as big as the moon.
And he always took me to some fine shop
And gave me a glass of ginger-pop.

He took me out in the country, too,
Where buttercups and daisies grew;
And on one big bridge we used to stand
And watch the boats — it was Fairyland. . . .

Dad died when I was still quite small.
I think I missed him the most of all;
And though I've seen 'most every sight
Since I was such a tiny wight,

SUNDAY

I often long for those Sunday walks,
My red balloon, and our simple talks.
And I've sought, but I never can seem to find
Those curious streets that used to wind

To that wonderful bridge on which we stood,
And that flower-filled meadow by the wood.
Yet I know if I found them, the tears would start,
And I think it would almost break my heart.

THE RUSH HOUR

THIS is the big excitement of their lives!—
This teeming rush-hour — six o'clock at night.
I never saw such tired eyes; I never saw such faces,
So weary at the close of a hard day.
Those bright electric bulbs in the thundering Subway
Bring out the tragic lines on their tragic brows —
Girls old before their time, dizzily swaying
In that awful conglomeration of human beings.
Those merciless lights!— hiding no single blemish,
Placed there with their flaming candle power
So that the throngs may read their evening papers.
But some of the girls are far too tired to read.
They only hang on the straps,
Sick with the noise of the train speeding up-town,
Yet glad to hear it, since it means to them
That every moment they are nearer their sad homes.

It seems to me they are always rushing —
The forlorn sweat-shop workers, the tired sales-girls,
The pale clerks who light a cigarette

THE RUSH HOUR

The moment that they leave the crowded Subway —
Hurrying, rushing, pushing, shoving,
Always moving in a monotonous procession.
In the morning they rush to perform miserable occupations

In factories and lofts and darkened rooms;
And in the evening when the whistle blows
They rush for the same inevitable cars
That hurl them to their undesired homes.
Always these tragic people are rushing, rushing.
ing. . . .

But some day they shall go slowly, very slowly,
One at a time, to a distant quiet place —
The only leisurely ride they shall ever know.

THE TWO OLD MEN

THERE was something quaint and lovely about
the two old men,
As they sat together in the crowded car.
I, and the other young people around me,
Watched them, and heard their quiet conversation.

We gathered, in that little trip downtown
Through the great city, thundering with pain,
That these two wise yet simple comrades knew
Each other long ago, and here revived,
Through some exquisite accident,
Their boyish friendship after many years.

We caught but fragments of their pleasant talk,
But quite enough to love them for the way
They both recalled the record of old times.

And I thought: When I am very old and very tired,
I hope God sends to me so naturally
An old, old crony to renew lost days;

THE TWO OLD MEN

A comrade whom I knew when I was young,
One, unashamed as I, to show his heart
Wholly to me, unmindful of the crowd,
The curious crowd that might be all about us.

ANNIVERSARIES

ALWAYS it is a woman who remembers
Of two who might forget a certain day,
Whether it be of Love's bygone Novembers,
Or, happily, out of the heart of May.

Always a woman sits at Life's cold embers,
Seeking the gem where once it shining lay;
Always it is a woman who remembers,
While heedless goes a man upon his way.

NOËL!

I

HARK to each wonderful bell,
Singing, "Noël! Noël!"—
The jubilant chimes in a thousand towers,
Swinging in Winter like iron flowers
Lost in the cold December hours.
They sing and swing,
And the old Word bring,
The wise old Message that never dies,
Under the steadfast starlit skies.

NOËL!

II

The loud winds tell
It is our Noël,
And they echo the song of each clamouring bell.
They shout in the darkness over the snow,
And through the world the tidings blow.
The bells are the great glad voice of the Lord,
And the winds are His angels in sweet accord,
Whose whispers surge and sweep through the night
Where the watchers wait for the ancient Light.
“Noël! Noël!”
Sings each sudden bell.
From the flowers
In the towers
Come a wild “Noël!”

NOËL!

III

It is Christ's own hour,
It is Christ's Noël,
And the sad world faints in the wonderful swell.
The voice of God rings down the years
To hush our old discordant fears.
"Noël! Noël!" I hear Him call,
"A time of Peace hath come to all!"
His rapture shakes the moonlit hills,
His glory wakes our souls, and thrills
Beyond the world, beyond the sea,
To glory and Infinity.
"Noël! Noël!"
It is Christ's own hour!"
Thunders each bell like an iron flower
In every far and wind-blown tower.

THE LAST SLEEP

SOME shining April I shall be asleep,
And over me the ancient joy shall pass;
I shall not see young Spring dance down the world
With ribbons of green grass.

But I shall dream of all that I have lost —
Breath of the wind, immortal loveliness,
Wild beauty of the sunlight on the hills,
Now mine no less

Because I slumber. Nay, but more than mine,
Since I a part of them shall strangely be. . . .
Only, I ask, when the pink hawthorn breaks,
That one shall think of me.

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